

# Archetypal Themes in North Korean Literature

## Working Notes on Problems and Possibilities

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North Korean literature is a rarefied and neglected field of study in Anglo-American scholarship, and Jungian criticism is neither influential nor fashionable in contemporary literary criticism and theory. Specifically, Jung's writings on literature have been criticized for "gross overgeneralization" in search of universal archetypes across genres, periods, and languages (Grodén and Kreiswirth 1994, 38). Archetypal criticism is also said to present an inadequate challenge to received ideas (Selden, Widdowson, and Brooker 1993, 5) and to "oversimplify complex issues" (Stephen 2000, 353). Additionally, Jung has been critiqued for anti-Semitism, Nazism, racism, sexism, and discrimination against "primitive cultures," discouraging the use of his analytical psychology. If it is a measure of Jung's status in establishment literary criticism and theory, the majority of recently published or reissued anthologies and introductory works do not mention him.

Because Jungian psychoanalysis on its own is insufficiently equipped with the tools and vocabulary of literary criticism and theory, Jung's work naturally has to be supplemented with specialized texts in literary studies in the investigation of North Korean literature. Two major, though far from unproblematic, works that began to apply Jung to literature include Maud Bodkin's *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* (1934) and Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1954), the former being the more strictly Jungian application. Another important text is Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), a study in comparative mythology that examines the archetype of the hero. Campbell's theory of *monomyth* (the hero's journey) and the basic structure of heroic narrative—departure, initiation, and return—can be applied, for instance, to the post-colonial heroic legends of the late North Korean leader Kim Il Sung.

Such political lore, which exaggerates and fabricates historical facts to create a heroic epic, can be found in hagiographic works like Han Sul Ya's *Hero General Kim Il Sung* (1962), Baik Bong's three-volume *Kim Il Sung* (1969–1970), Kim Han Gil's *Modern History of Korea* (1979), and Kim Il Sung's eight-volume memoir titled *With the Century* (1992–1998). The latter work, for example, illustrates the journey of the hero from his birth in April 1912 and ends with his triumphal return to the homeland and leadership after the defeat of Japan in August 1945. One may also turn to North Korean “historical” novels such as *Dawn of a New Age* (trans. 1978), *The Mother Korea* (trans. 1978), *Revolutionary Aurora* (trans. 1978), and *The Year 1932* (trans. 1977). These works are about Kim Il Sung and his parents—that is, the family archetype. There is, moreover, the North Korean *socialist realist* classic *Sea of Blood: The Novel* (trans. 1982), adapted from an amateur stage play Kim coauthored in 1936 when he was a partisan in the Chinese Communist Party–led anticolonial, anti-Japanese insurgency in Manchuria.

In addition to Bodkin, Campbell, and Frye, a number of more recent works have argued for the relevance of Jung's ideas to literary criticism. These studies include Richard Sugg's *Jungian Literary Criticism* (1992); Susan Rowland's *C. G. Jung and Literary Theory* (1999); and James S. Baumlín, Tita French Baumlín, and George H. Jensen's *Post-Jungian Criticism* (2004). Since Jungian criticism has not explored the literary culture of North Korea, this article takes a preliminary foundational approach in attempting to apply Jungian theory toward understanding the archetypal underpinnings of North Korean literature.

## Archetypes within a North Korean Political Context

Archetypes in North Korean literature must be contextualized with historical and political scholarship in North Korean studies. Political scientist Jae-Cheon Lim's *Kim Jong Il's Leadership of North Korea*, for instance, describes the national-Stalinist regime under Kim Jong Il (b. 1942) as a “dynastic totalitarian regime”:

In a dynastic totalitarian regime, the cult of personality extends into the cult of family because the political heir is chosen from the “first family” and the first family becomes the royal family as patrimonial succession continues over generations. *Episodes in the family members' daily lives are converted into heroic myths and legends.* By birth alone, the heir of the first family is deemed more competent than any other in the totalitarian domain and his heirship is sacred and cannot be challenged by common people. Human equality does not reach up to the leader, and the people under the leader are only equal with each other. (2009, 88; emphasis added.)

Here, the roles played by the narrative modes of heroic myth and heroic legend in directing and structuring sociopolitical and sociopsychological life in North Korea are of particular relevance for a literarily oriented psychoanalytic/archetypal criticism.

Among scholars, there is no consensus as to the political character of the North Korean state and regime. This paper uses the classifications “deformed workers’ state,” since North Korea was founded under Soviet Army occupation in the absence of a workers’ revolution, and “national-Stalinist,” since the regime modeled the state on the Soviet Stalinist autarkic system and maintains the nationalist program of *socialism in one country* (*han nara sahoejuui*) in the guise of “self-reliance” (*chuch’e*) and “our style socialism” (*urishik sahoejuui*). Nevertheless, several other characterizations employed by academics are Communist, Confucian-Stalinist, Marxist-Leninist, socialist corporatist, and state socialist. North Korea has also been called a monarchy, theocracy, family state, garrison state, guerrilla band state, outlaw state, rogue state, Soprano state (i.e., crime family state), terrorist state, and totalitarian state. The regime itself uses the designations *Juche* Korea and *Songun* Korea. These issues have to be considered in the analysis, criticism, and interpretation of North Korean narratives.

## Working Notes

If Jungian criticism is to be brought to bear in the analysis of North Korean literature, either in the original or in translation, a special set of problems arises, which is not appreciated in the only body of work that mentions Jung in this context: the writings of Brian Myers, author of *Han Sörya and North Korean Literature* (1994) and *The Cleanest Race* (2010).<sup>1</sup> What follows is a set of working notes for a more developed application of psychoanalytic/archetypal criticism to North Korean literature.

Appraisals of North Korean literature tend to subsume it under discussions of history, policy, politics, and sociology, rather than focus on narratology and narrative modes. Though North Korean literature is controlled by a now-eroding totalitarian national-Stalinist state and heavily imbued with propaganda, the literary texts are not registers *only* of policy and tactics, but also, simultaneously, of bureaucracy, patriarchy, and trauma. Beginning in 1910, the traumatic component, in particular, manifests with the history of Japanese colonialism, fascism, and sex slavery; U.S.-Soviet liberation and occupation; national division and civil war; U.S. and Chinese intervention; U.S. saturation bombing, slaughter of civilians and combatants alike, perpetration of sex crimes, and the leveling of North Korea as a whole; postwar reconstruction and purges of writers; and, later, the post-Soviet economic crisis.

The collective experience of national trauma is translated into the narrative form of an idealist symbolic mode, a postcolonial *nationalist allegory*, that fuses the colonial-era heritage of “proletarian literature”—descended from the Korean Artists Proletarian Federation (1925–1935)—and thematic adaptations from Soviet Stalinist and Maoist *socialist realism* bathed in indigenous Korean symbolisms and national iconographies. North Korean literature is a nationally and culturally adapted form of *socialist realism* that faithfully observes the Stalinist formulation “national in form, socialist in

content,” or *minjokjök hyöngshik kwa sahoejuüijök naeyong* in Korean. Today, the national literature is called *Juche* realism after the state ideology of “self-reliance,” with increasing references to *Songun* (military-first) literature since the ascension of the Korean People’s Army during the Great Famine of 1996 to 1999. The role of *Juche* ideology and the arts has been discussed by Keith Howard (1996), Youngmin Kwon (1991), and Vladimir Pucek (1996).

Where do these developments place a Jungian analysis of North Korean literature? In a footnoted citation to *Symbols of Transformation*, Jung is mentioned almost in passing in Brian Myers’ *Han Sörya and North Korean Literature*, a study that centers on the leading iconographer of the personality cult of Kim Il Sung:

The General [Kim Il Sung in Han Sörya’s novel *History* (*Ryöksa*, 1953)] is more of a mother figure, what with his fussy concern for the orphans’ clothing and hygiene, his invitingly expansive chest, and his round and soft face, which, with its “pretty dimples” and “pretty side-teeth,” conforms to the traditional Korean ideal of *feminine* beauty. His dominant feature, and that which leaves the greatest impression on all who see him, is his smile, the expression of his indulgent nature. If [Soviet] socialist realism’s fatherly educators confirm Jung’s interpretation of the paternal principle as being on the side of discipline and consciousness, then Han Sörya’s General clearly embodies the maternal principle on the side of the instincts. (1994, 102; italics in original.)

Another apparently “Jungian” realization in *History* is said to be found in a story Kim Il Sung tells of a boy whose father refuses his request for a rifle during the Russian Civil War, thus prompting the boy to dream of “his mother throwing him a rifle.” The boy subsequently “uses his mother’s key to steal his father’s rifle from his chest” and kills several White Army soldiers, after which he is inducted into the Red Army (103).

Myers’ position, to date, is basically that North Korean literature is crude propaganda, structurally incompatible with the Soviet *socialist realist* classics, a failure of *socialist realism* in toto, and based on a “paranoid, race-based nationalism” that is an assimilation of Japanese fascist ideology, not Soviet Stalinism. North Korean texts, he argues, also construct infantilizing narratives that render North Koreans as a “child race in an evil world,” who need to be protected by a “parent leader” (*öböi suryöngnim*) or “mother” (*ömöni*) (Myers 2007). The mother figure today, Myers says, is represented by the leader Kim Jong Il, who is described with maternal metaphors in official propaganda, even though he is a man.<sup>2</sup> This argument leads to the following conclusion: “Far from being a Confucian or Stalinist patriarchy, in other words, North Korea is that very rare thing, a dictatorship without a father principle. Erich Fromm once wrote that such states can have no conscience” (2008). Fromm, however, did not hold the view that a nation-state can have a conscience, and nowhere in his writings will one find him saying that a “dictatorship” *with* a “father principle” has a “conscience.” As to the hypothesis about the nonpatriarchal nature of North Korea, one may juxtapose it against an October 2005 Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) article titled

“*Rodong Sinmun* [*Workers’ Daily*] on Great Mother Party, WPK,” part of which reads as follows:

The main factor of terming the WPK [i.e., the Workers’ Party of Korea] the great mother party lies in embodying the benevolent politics and the Songun [military-first] politics together in party building and activities under the banner of Juche [self-reliance]. [...] It is the valuable truth proved by the 60-year-long history of party building that *a party can become a mother party only when it has the great father of the people*, who takes responsibilities for their destiny to the end, at the head of the party and army [i.e., Kim Jong Il]. (“Rodong” 2005a; emphasis added.)<sup>3</sup>

The concept of a nonpatriarchal North Korea is complicated by the fact that there are many invocations of Kim Jong Il as “father” (*abŏji*) in North Korea, which is a male-dominated society with explicit male/female gender roles, something that language will reflect. Indeed, “Kim Il Sung, and now Kim Jong Il, are the fathers of their country, and the people are the children. These leaders take care of their ‘children’ just as a benevolent father would,” says political scientist Han S. Park (2002, 85). “One must not forget that North Korea is a country of paternalist supervision by the ‘benevolent’ Great Leader,” he adds (139). A Jungian might posit that if Kim Jong Il is accorded an additional role as a “mother,” the totalitarian North Korean state has not so much lost the father principle as it has strategically projected onto Kim the archetype of the Great Mother, who nurtures or devours her children. In other words, *the state exploits innate archetypal forms in the collective unconscious, as well as instinctual dependence on the mother for survival, in order to place the North Korean people under the grip of their own inner psychic forces*. Now, if the aim of individuation (i.e., “coming to self-hood” or “self-realization”) is to “divest the self of the false wrappings of the persona” and the “suggestive power of primordial images” (Jung 1976, 122, 123), the political exploitation of archetypes would be to the detriment of that process. The archetype of the Great Mother is, after all, used as an instrument of social and psychological control.

### The Great Mother

As indicated in the previously cited KCNA news article, the North Korean national-Stalinist regime also projects the archetypal image of the Great Mother onto the ruling Workers’ Party of Korea, which is called the “mother party” (*ŏmŏni dang*). This is seen in the following translated excerpt from the poem “Mother” (*Ŏmŏni*, 1989) by Kim Ch’ŏl:

Ah, Korean Workers’ Party, at whose  
breast only  
My life begins and ends  
Be I buried in the ground or strewn  
to the wind

I remain your son, and again return to  
 your breast!  
 Entrusting my body to your  
 affectionate gaze,  
 Your loving outstretched hand,  
 I cry out forever in the voice of a child,  
 Mother! I can't live without Mother!  
 (Myers 2004)

The primal imagery in this poem is related to Kim Jong Il's 1986 leadership doctrine of the "immortal socio-political organism" in which the leader (*suryŏng*), party, and masses form an organic whole, with the leader assuming the role of "top brain" and "centre of life" who commands the "absolute and unconditional" loyalty of the masses (Kim Jong Il 1995, 16, 19). The party plays the role of a blood vessel linking the leader and the masses (Kim, K. S. 2008, 92), and *Juche* ideology reinforces the notion that the masses are guided by a "collective consciousness embodied in a great leader" (French 2005, 41). In the words of Kim Jong Il in his 1987 speech "On Establishing the *Juche* Outlook on the Revolution":

Only through the party organization, the parent body, can the popular masses be integrated into an independent socio-political organism and become the real masters of their own destiny. We must value and respect the Party organization as the parent body of our integrity. *We refer to the leader as the fatherly leader and to the Party as the motherly Party* because the Party organization with the leader at its centre is the parent body of our socio-political integrity. (1988, 12; emphasis added.)<sup>4</sup>

Here, the official North Korean translation of "parent leader" (*ŏbŏi suryŏngnim*) as "fatherly leader" reveals that the social and semantic content of the original term for "parent" is not neutral, but gendered. North Korea, which began its existence with the Stalinist program, is unlike the Soviet Union in that the state projects *both* archetypes of Wise Old Man and Great Mother onto its foremost patriarchs: the dead "Eternal President" Kim Il Sung and his son-successor Kim Jong Il.

### Two Types of Leader

In 1936, Jung posited two types of political leader: the "chieftain type," who rules by knowing everything (e.g., Mussolini, Stalin, and Roosevelt), and the "medicine man type" who has dreams, who is a medium, and who rules by revelation (e.g., Hitler) (341). Kim Jong Il arguably belongs to the first category. Notably, the North Korean title for supreme leader, *suryŏng*, literally means "chieftain." According to Jung's other political classifications, Kim would also be characterized as a "tribal ruler," who preserves "local distinctions and differences"; the North Korean state would be termed an "oligarchy"; and the ruling WPK would be described as a "privileged ruling caste" (340, 341).

## Two Modes of Artistic Creation

Returning to the *Juche* socialist realist poem “Mother,” it recalls what Jung says in his 1930 essay “Psychology and Literature”: “Literary products of highly dubious merit are often of the greatest interest to the psychologist” (1930/1950/1966, CW 15, ¶136). Jung posits two basic modes of artistic creation, the *psychological mode* and the *visionary mode*:

The psychological mode works with materials drawn from man’s conscious life—with crucial experiences, powerful emotions, suffering, passion, the stuff of human fate in general. All this is assimilated by the psyche of the poet, raised from the commonplace to the level of poetic experience, and expressed with a power of conviction that gives us a greater depth of human insight by making us vividly aware of those everyday happenings which we tend to evade or to overlook because we perceive them only dully or with a feeling of discomfort. The raw material of this kind of creation is derived from the contents of man’s consciousness, from his eternally repeated joys and sorrows, but clarified and transfigured by the poet. (¶139)

Furthermore:

Countless literary products belong to this class: all the novels dealing with love, the family milieu, crime and society, together with *didactic poetry*, the greater number of lyrics, and drama both tragic and comic. Whatever artistic form they may take, their contents always derive from the sphere of conscious human experience—from the psychic foreground of life, we might say. That is why I call this mode of creation “psychological”; *it remains within the limits of the psychologically intelligible*. Everything it embraces—the experience as well as its artistic expression—belongs to the realm of a clearly understandable psychology. Even the psychic raw material, the experiences themselves, have nothing strange about them; on the contrary, they have been known from the beginning of time—passion and its fated outcome, human destiny and its sufferings, eternal nature with its beauty and horror. (¶140; emphasis added.)

The visionary mode, in contrast, originates from experiences that are unfamiliar, strange, primordial, and surpass human understanding; it is “glamorous, daemonic, and grotesque” (¶141). Kim Ch’ol’s symbolic paean to the WPK is a form of “didactic poetry” that operates in the psychological mode. Rather than being unconscious and visionary, the work is a *nationalist allegory* that strategically manipulates familiar archetypes with material from the level of conscious human life. There is nothing unfamiliar about the North Korean poem with its central metaphors of the party as *breast-feeding mother* and the masses as *helpless infant son*. Deeply emotional, instinctual, precognitive, and even religious as this imagery may be, its reality is knowable.

Reminiscent of the Virgin Mary suckling the baby Jesus, the sacral aspect of the poem may owe something to the Christian background of the late North Korean leader Kim Il Sung, who was raised in a family of Presbyterian Korean nationalists and whose mother, Kang Pan Sok (1892–1932), was a Presbyterian deacon. Moreover, Kim’s



so-called lifelong motto was “The people are my God” (*Na üi hanünim ün darümanin inmin ida*; literally, “My God is none other than the people”). This slogan is not a statement of humanism, but the application of a theological category to humanity, which renders a chimerical *abstract humanity*. As portrayed in the poem, the North Korean people are socially powerless. The corporeal associations in the panegyric are not only psychoanalytical associations but also political associations: The life and death of the *son* (masses) are linked to the *breast* (recognition) of the *mother* (party). Whether the son is buried or turned to ashes, he remains the mother’s son and returns to her breast, that is, his memory is commended to her recognition. The son entrusts his *body* (existence) to the mother’s *gaze* (monitoring), and he cries endlessly for his mother’s *hand* (control), “I can’t live without Mother!” (I can’t live without the Workers’ Party of Korea!). There is literal significance here.

As to the psychoanalytic associations, the North Korean poem reveals the family archetype that is seen, for example, in the case of the Catholic Church: “The *mana* personality, the medicine-man, is the *pontifex maximus*, the *Papa*; the Church is *mater ecclesia*, the *magna mater* of magical power, and mankind are children in need of help and grace” (Jung 1976, 41). *Juche* theoreticians have been studying links between *Juche* ideology and Christian theology since the 1980s (Park 2002, 36). But one should be careful not to conflate Christianity and North Korean *Juche*-Stalinism, even if the latter is a “political religion” in the sociological sense. A political religion by definition sacralizes a political order; claims authority over all aspects of social life; specifies norms, values, and social relations; and commands devotion from everyone (Zuo 1991, 104–105). The North Korean poem does, however, make use of imagery like the *magna mater* and the masses as children because, as seen from a Jungian standpoint, the husband, wife, father, mother, and child are “ordinary everyday facts” that are “eternally repeated” and “create the mightiest archetypes of all”:

The deposit of mankind’s whole ancestral experience—so rich in emotional imagery—of father, mother, child, husband and wife, of the magic personality, of dangers to body and soul, has exalted this group of archetypes into the supreme regulating principles of religious and even of political life, in unconscious recognition of their tremendous psychic power. (Jung 1976, 43)

Beyond the *Juche* socialist realist poem, the mother and motherhood serve important regulating functions in North Korean social and political life. This is seen in Kim Il Sung’s speeches on women, including “The Duty of Mothers in the Education of Children” (1961), “On Some Tasks Confronting the Women’s Union Organizations” (1965), “The Communist Education and Upbringing of Children Is an Honourable Revolutionary Duty of Nursery and Kindergarten Teachers” (1966), and “On the Revolutionization and Working-Classization of Women” (1971). In the first speech, delivered at the National Meeting of Mothers in 1961, Kim says:



A family is a cell of our society in which one's nearest kith and kin—parents, wife and children, brothers and sisters—live together. Here one is constantly educated from childhood by his closest relatives. At home we can properly conduct the kind of education that can hardly be done at school or in society.

Mother has to bear the major responsibility for home education. Her responsibility is greater than father's. Why? Because it is she who gives birth to children and brings them up. Mother is the first educator of children. She teaches them everything necessary, starting with how to walk, how to speak, how to dress and how to eat. Whether she gives them proper initial training or not is of great importance in their development. If mother gives her children proper education at home, it is very easy to educate them at school and in public organization. Proper maternal education of children helps them study well at school and work well in society.

What is learned from mother in childhood is remembered throughout one's life. The things that remain longest in our memories are our mother's words and examples. The impressions mother gives have a great impact on the formation of man's character and habits. The mothers of the great men of all ages gave their sons a good education from childhood. (1971, 16–17)

The work of mothers is not merely confined to home education in North Korea. The state policy is to bring up children in nurseries and kindergartens. Mothers have the "important duty" and "weighty responsibility and the honour" to raise children into builders of national "communist society" (Kim Il Sung 1971, 19). Historically, the institution of motherhood or "mother power" in Korea served to maintain the Neo-Confucian patriarchal system during the Chosŏn (Yi) dynasty (1392–1910). Mother power was a conservative force that reinforced male domination; mothers were esteemed and rewarded in the system; and a woman's life-goal was to produce successful sons (Cho 1996, 86, 97). Even though son preference seems to be either absent or weak in North Korea (Goodkind 1999, 215, 216), the society, government, and military are male-dominated.

The most successful case of a North Korean woman's life-goal to produce loyal national-communists is described in volume one of the recent official biography *Kim Jong Il*: "Kim Jong Suk was not only Kim Jong Il's loving mother but a teacher who inspired in him the sense of mission to carry forward the revolutionary cause of Juche" (Kim Jong Il 2005, 14). Kim Jong Suk (1917–1949), who was not politically significant in her lifetime, is praised in North Korea as the "great mother of Korea," the "mother of revolution," and the hero of the anti-Japanese war who faithfully protected her husband, Kim Il Sung. She is the ultimate mother and maternal educator. After her husband and son, Kim Jong Suk is also one of the "three generals of Mt. Paektu," the so-called "sacred mountain of revolution" where Kim Il Sung's guerilla partisans were based in the 1930s and early 1940s, and where Kim Jong Il, the "great sun of the 21st century," was allegedly born. The title "great mother of Korea" (*Chosŏn ŭi widaehan ōmŏni*) is also shared by Kim Il Sung's mother, Kang Pan Sok. There are undoubtedly

Neo-Confucian resonances in these archetypal symbolizations of the familial and maternal. Jae-Cheon Lim has said that “family was the most important social institution” in Confucian society; that “the state became an extension of the family”; and that “[Confucian] scholars referred to kings as *kunbu* (fatherly king) and queens as *kungmo* (state’s mother)” (2009, 147).

Lim adds that the Confucian values of loyalty and filial piety were revived in North Korea in the 1970s to justify patrimonial succession when Kim Jong Il became Kim Il Sung’s heir. Neo-Confucianism—the real basis of which is feudal economy, not *socialism in one country*—is part of the historical and ideological substratum of North Korean national-Stalinism, which, like Soviet Stalinism, has a tendency toward archaization, that is, the revival of premodern social and cultural patterns.<sup>5</sup> Besides the Neo-Confucian component, Kim’s political ideas about women are apparently modeled on Soviet Stalinist conceptions and legislation concerning the family, motherhood, and womanhood, for example, the anti-abortion and anti-divorce law of 1936 and the family and motherhood law of 1944, which sanctified the bourgeois notion of the nuclear family. One may consider the fact that Kim Il Sung idolized and emulated Stalin (Suh 1988, 177; Lim 2009, 19); the Soviet Army sustained Kim’s leadership from 1945 until the outbreak of the Korean War (1950–1953); North Korea was constructed as a *deformed workers’ state* under direct Soviet military tutelage from 1945 to 1948 and indirectly until 1950; the North Korean Law on the Equality of the Sexes was instituted on July 30, 1946, under Soviet military auspices; and Stalin both edited and approved the North Korean constitution of 1948. Only after the rise of *Juche* with Kim Il Sung’s anti-Soviet reformist *Juche* speech of 1955 (a response to the unfolding Soviet “de-Stalinization” campaign), the emergence of the Sino-Soviet conflict in 1956 and split in the early 1960s, and Kim’s ultranationalist assertions of Korean identity, did Soviet and even Maoist Chinese ideas begin to be presented as North Korean innovations.

For Kim Il Sung, women are obligated to be mother, worker, and national-communist simultaneously.<sup>6</sup> The conservative mother cult in North Korea retains an essential continuity with the patriarchal ethos of Neo-Confucianism. The relation is similar to that of the mother cult in Stalinist Russia, which was inspired by the cult of the family and the cult of motherhood under czarism. But whereas women in the feudal Chosŏn era were restricted to the domestic realm, the limited gains of women under North Korean national-Stalinism allow them to participate in political institutions “ranging from the Supreme People’s Assembly (SPA) to local government organs”; to “account for a very high number of cadres in the national economy—especially in agriculture, light industry, public health and education”; and to serve in the armed forces, according to the official line (Halliday 1985, 52, 54). Yet few women have actually risen above the level of low-ranking managers and clerks, and in those agencies with a dominant female presence, males fill most managerial positions. Even in

secondary schools, principals are typically men. On the political stage, the minority of women at the top come from the Kim Il Sung clan; the 20.1 percent in the SPA “legislature” are largely “exemplary workers” selected by the authorities; and of the 260 ministers between 1948 and 2000, only 6 were women (Lankov 2007, 74–76). Acknowledging these social realities is essential to investigating the father, mother, and child archetypes in North Korean political-literary discourse and the patriarchal, familial, and maternal symbolism of the Great Mothers of Korea.

## Conclusion

Jung and Campbell propose that basic narratives are intrinsic to the human psyche. An examination of North Korean *nationalist allegory* and the postcolonial heroic legends of Kim Il Sung and his family should not, however, dismiss how historically determined socioeconomic forces indirectly and mediately influence archetypal forms. Methodologically, that means looking at archetypes not simply as “myth-motifs in general,” “forms which the instincts assume,” “unconscious images of the instincts,” the “correlate of the idea of the collective unconscious,” which individuals possess identically, or even as “pre-existent form[s]” (Jung 1976, 42, 44, 59, 60). As the intellectual historian Petteri Pietikäinen posits, archetypes can be understood as “symbolic forms, which direct and structure man’s cultural and non-cognitive experiences (*Erlebnisse*) in a collective ‘mental infrastructure’” (1998a, 339). As symbolic forms, archetypes are seen not as preexistent mental phenomena that are biologically inherited from time immemorial, but as cultural products that are “accessible to historical and cultural analyses” (340). If it is the case that Jung suffers from “methodological solipsism,” and if “in their eagerness to give mythological explanations to events, phenomena and ideas, Jungians often totally overlook any explanations offered by historians or social scientists” (1988b, 381), North Korean literature will be misinterpreted. Historical and political scientific scholarship is necessary, not simply because North Korean literature is a continuation of politics by other means, but because ignorance of history and politics can lead to at least three possible extremes: abstraction of the texts from social life, rejection of the texts as worthless, or justification of the national-Stalinist regime on the basis of the state-sanctioned literary texts.

## ENDNOTES

1. *Han Sörya and North Korean Literature* is a biography of a canonical North Korean writer, and *The Cleanest Race* is a critique of North Korean propaganda. Because these works suffer from argument by analogy, hasty generalization, and scorn for the subject matter, they should be read with caution and in conjunction with Tatiana Gabroussenko’s *Soldiers on the Cultural Front* (2010), Suk-Young Kim’s *Illusive Utopia* (2010), and Han S. Park’s *North Korea* (2002), which are studies of North Korean literary history, North Korean symbolic performance, and the North Korean ideological worldview.

2. A North Korean dictionary from 1964 provides the following definitions of *ömöni*: (1) a woman who has given birth to one; (2) a respectful term for someone of an age similar to one's mother; (3) a metaphor for being loving, looking after everything, and worrying about others; and (4) a metaphor for the source from which something originates (Myers 2007). Kim Jong Il uses the third sense of *ömöni* in his 1965 speech to the WPK central committee, "Look after the People in a Responsible Manner as a Mother Would Do with Her Children." There, he says party officials should have "motherly concern," and he speaks of a "motherly party" that looks after the people and their future (Kim Jong Il 1965).
3. The original *Rodong Sinmun* article does not employ the Korean word for "father" (*aboji*), but the morphologically gender-neutral term "parent" (*oböi*), a blend of "mother" and "father," which has been used since the 1960s and first referred to the late Kim Il Sung. The phrase "great father of the people" thus appears as "great parent of the people" (*widaehan inmin üi oböi*) in Korean (Rodong 2005b). Still, that does not eliminate *oböi* as a semantically gendered construction. Linguistic research of grammatically genderless languages such as Chinese, Finnish, and Turkish has shown that morphologically gender-neutral human nouns can have a covert male bias and male connotation (Ceccagno 2006, 224). Korean, which is also a grammatically genderless language, is no exception. Male bias comes through in the official North Korean translation of "parent" as "father" and in the social fact that the great "parent" leaders of North Korea—Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il—have been all-powerful men and patriarchs.
4. The metaphor of a "mother party" was used in the Soviet Union. Joseph Stalin, for example, had the following to say to the Young Communist League in 1932: "[B]e worthy sons and daughters of *our mother, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*" (1954, 143; emphasis added). Here, the Soviet Communist Party is not only the mother of the Young Communist League youth, but of the whole Soviet people, who are essentially Stalin's little children. The infantilization of Soviet citizens under Stalin is discussed in Susan E. Reid's essay "The New Soviet Woman and the Leader Cult in Soviet Art" (2001, 210).
5. This concept is adapted from late Sovietologist Robert C. Tucker, who speaks of the "strong element of 'archaization' in Stalinism." Tucker, however, is more interested in state construction and speaks of archaization in terms of the "resurrection of the historic tsarist pattern of building a powerful military-national state by revolutionary means involving the extension of direct coercive controls over the population and the growth of state power in the process" (1999, 98). That understanding of archaization is still applicable to North Korean national-Stalinism and the North Korean party-military state.
6. According to the (North) Korean Democratic Women's Union: "Women with three children aged thirteen or less get eight hours' pay for six hours' work. There are women's sanatoria, rest homes, maternity hospitals and children's hospitals. As for birth control, there is no such policy" (Halliday 1985, 53). Like the practice in the Stalinist Soviet Union, North Korean women with six or more children are given special awards.

#### NOTE

References to *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung* are cited in the text as CW, volume number, and paragraph number. *The Collected Works* are published in English by Routledge (UK) and Princeton University Press (USA).

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#### APPENDIX: NORTH KOREAN LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION

*The following are forty-three North Korean novels, novelettes, short stories, and opera librettos in English translation. The Foreign Languages Publishing House, Pyongyang, is abbreviated as FLPH.*

##### Novels

- April 15th Writing Staff, *Dawn of a New Age*, Vol. 1 (FLPH, 1978)
- . *Revolutionary Aurora* (FLPH, 1978)
- . *The Year 1932* (FLPH, 1977)
- The Mother of Korea* (FLPH, 1978)
- Sea of Blood* (FLPH, 1982)

##### Novelettes

- Cho, Ryong Chul, *The Tale of Chun Hyang* (FLPH, 1991)
- Chon, Se Bong, *The People of the Fighting Village* (New Korea Press, 1955; FLPH, 1986)
- Han, Sörya, *Jackals* (*Han Sörya and North Korean Literature*, Cornell, 1994)



### Short Stories

- Chin, Jae Hwan, "A Usual Morning" (*A Usual Morning*, FLPH, 1988)
- Chon, Gi Jong, "Military March No. 1" (*A Usual Morning*, FLPH, 1988)
- Chon, Se Bong, "Ogi" (*Korean Short Stories*, FLPH, 1986; Fredonia Books, 2003)
- Han, Song Ho, "Guide" (*Korea Today*, 631, 2009, <http://175.45.176.14/en>)
- Han, Ung-Bin, "Second Encounter" (*Words Without Borders*, 2003, <http://www.wordswithoutborders.org>)
- Hwang, Gon, "The Island in Flames" (*The Island in Flames*, FLPH, 1966)
- "The Japanese Imperialists Who Suffered Annihilation" (*Korean Studies* 23, 1999)
- Jo, Phil Su, "After Gunfire Dies Away" (*Korea Today*, 617, 618, 619, and 620, 2007, <http://175.45.176.14/en>)
- Jong, Ki Song, "Right to Return Home" (*Korea Today*, 643 and 644, 2010, <http://175.45.176.14/en>)
- Kang, Kwi-mi, "A Tale of Music" (*Literature from the "Axis of Evil,"* New Press, 2006; NPR, 2006, <http://www.npr.org>)
- Kim, Byong Hun, "Travelling Companions" (*Travelling Companions*, FLPH, 1967); "Fellow Travellers" (*Korean Short Stories*, FLPH, 1986; Fredonia Books, 2003)
- Kim, Hye Yong, "First Meeting" (*Korea Today*, 607, 608, 609, 610, and 611, 2007, <http://175.45.176.14/en>)
- Kim, Puk-Hyang, "The Son" (*Korean Studies* 1, 1977; *Modern Korean Fiction*, Columbia, 2005)
- Ko, Byong Sam, "Unfinished Sculpture" (*Korean Short Stories*, FLPH, 1986; Fredonia Books, 2003)
- Li, Myong Gyun, "Homeland" (*A Usual Morning*, FLPH, 1988)
- Li, Sang Hyon, "But My Son Is at the Front" (*The Island in Flames*, FLPH, 1966)
- Lim, Hwa-won, "The Fifth Photograph" (*Literature from the "Axis of Evil,"* New Press, 2006)
- Om, Dan Ung, "Everyone in Position!" (*Korean Short Stories*, FLPH, 1986; Fredonia Books, 2003)
- Pak, Il Myong, "Small House in My Village" (*Korea Today*, 629 and 630, 2008, <http://175.45.176.14/en>)
- Pak, Wung Gol, "Signalman Firstclass" (*The Island in Flames*, FLPH, 1966)
- Pyon, Hui Gun, "History of Iron" (*Korean Short Stories*, FLPH, 1986; Fredonia Books, 2003)
- Sok, Yun Gi, "Happiness" (*Travelling Companions*, FLPH, 1967; *Korean Short Stories*, FLPH, 1986; Fredonia Books, 2003)
- Sok, Yun Gi, "Second Answer" (*Korea Today*, 633, 634, and 635, 2009, <http://175.45.176.14/en>)

### Opera Librettos

- The Fate of a Self-Defence Corps Man* (FLPH, 1976)
- The Flower Girl* (FLPH, 1973, 1978)
- Glorious Is Our Fatherland* (FLPH, 1969)
- The Heroines of Namgang* (FLPH, 1978)
- Sea of Blood* (FLPH, 1972, 1974, 1977)
- Song of Glory to the Fatherly Marshal* (FLPH, 1974)
- The Song of Mt. Kumgang-San* (FLPH, 1973); or *The Song of Kumgang-San Mountain* (FLPH, 1974, 1977)
- Song of Paradise* (FLPH, 1978)
- Tell O Forest!* (FLPH, 1974); or *Tell the Story, Forest!* (FLPH, 1978)
- The Tale of Shim Chung* (FLPH, 1958)
- A True Daughter of the Party* (FLPH, 1973, 1974, 1978)
- The Youth Orchard* (FLPH, 1978)

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#### ABSTRACT

This paper, composed as a set of working notes, addresses the problems and possibilities of applying Jungian analytical psychology to North Korean literature, one of the most neglected and rarefied subjects of inquiry in Anglo-American literary scholarship. Despite the unusualness of such an application, literary works produced in national-Stalinist North Korea employ prominent motifs and symbols that are familiar in Jungian archetypal criticism, for example, family, father, mother, and child archetypes. These archetypes are peculiar in that they are realized within the state-sanctioned political and narrative framework of a nationally and culturally adapted socialist realism.

#### KEY WORDS

archetypes, Great Mother, *Juche*, C. G. Jung, Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il, literature, North Korea, socialist realism, Stalinism, Wise Old Man